

# Red River Ramblings

DECEMBER, 2024 - VOL. 25 NO. 6

YES, VIRGINIA. IT DOES SNOW IN OKLAHOMA

Sunday, December 1, 2024

11:15 am – The Morning Assembly

**Our Shared Values: “Interdependence  
The Rev Dr Mark Y. A. Davies, leading**

We honor the interdependent web of all existence and acknowledge our place in it.” This Sunday is the first in a series of discourses on the recently adopted Shared Values of the UUA.

Sunday, December 8, 2024

11:15 am - The Morning Assembly

**This I Believe:  
Five Members Share their Credo:  
Dan Althoff, Elbert Hill, Marla Loturco, Jana Norris,  
and Doug Strong**

We all have a foundation upon which we build our religious philosophy. It is nestled deep in our soul rather than printed in any brochure and hungers to be shared. It comes from the depth of our own thought and heart. It is the core of our individual spiritual path. Credo means, “Believe.” Astute credos marry the gifts of both intellect and spirit. Credos spur presenters to select highlights from their religious odyssey, highlight in those affirmations that sustain them the happy and hard days and nights of life. *Honoring Merrilee Alexander Kick, and everyone is warmly invited to stay for lunch.*

*During the morning assembly, we will recognize Merrilee Alexander Kick for her exceptional donation to our church for asbestos mitigation, roof repair, Bluetooth keyboard, and excessive renovation of the kitchen*

12:15 pm - A Special all-church Sunday Brunch honoring Merilee.

Sunday, December 15, 2024

11:15 am – The Morning Assembly

**Our Shared Values: “Pluralism.  
The Rev Dr Mark Y.A. Davies, leading**

The second value Mark will focus on as he continues a series of discourses on our recently adopted Shared Values.

Sunday, December 22, 2024

11:15 am – The Morning Assembly

**Holiday Sing-along  
The SonShine Sisters, Dan Althoff, Jim Holmes, and  
Carole Harner!**

Join us or a joyful sing-along filled with favorite Christmas songs. Bring your voice, your finds, and your holiday cheer for this delightful musical celebration. Let’s make this season merry and bright – together! We can’t wait to sing with you. We can’t wait to sing with you!

11:15 am – The Morning Assembly



**Laugh Out the Old Year  
The Congregation**

As we prepare to bid farewell to the old year, let's gather for a morning of laughter and lightness. They say laughter is the best medicine, and it's a remedy we might be calling on often in the coming four years. Bring a story, poem, song, joke, or anything that made you laugh out loud and join us for a joyful time of congregational sharing. Together, we'll celebrate the healing power of humor and start the new year with smiles on our faces. Don't miss it!

## "Share The Bowl" returns

Our congregation had a tradition involving giving money away! We did it every month for a number of years. In fact the only reason we ceased the practice was due to the pandemic which made sense but somehow we've never returned to always give the funds – not linked to anyone's pledge to the church – left in the bowl would be donated to community groups helping those in need.

Last week as a small group gathered at church for Thanksgiving the subject of our **Share the Bowl** program came up. Among us were three charter members along with three long-term members and we concluded that it is time to return Share the Bowl. The funds raised can again, be held until the spring or fall congregational meeting when we the members can vote for the agencies to help support.

We are not alone in this practice, many, if not most, UU congregations do this.

## Spiritual Perspectives is ..

...starting to explore a new discussion this month by exploring *Sacred Nature, Restoring Our Ancient Bond with the Natural World* by Karen Armstrong. *Armstrong is a British author and commentator of Irish Catholic descent known for her books on comparative religion. A former Roman Catholic religious sister, she went from a conservative to a more liberal and mystical Christian faith.*

She is not unknown within Unitarian Universalist circles; in fact, she delivered the prestigious Ware Lecture at our 2011 General Assembly. The lecture had been "established in honor of the distinguished services of three generations of the Ware family to the cause of Pure Christianity."

If you are interested in exploring her work, you might enjoy watching the 57-minute video of her Ware Lecture [here](https://vimeo.com/389332468).

<https://vimeo.com/389332468>



04 Donna Toerper ♦ 07 David Lawrence ♦ 07 Cristin Mackey  
12 Cindy Buffington ♦ 17 Amy Hoffman-Shehan ♦ 18 Jim Holmes

## Minister Search Update

The Minister Search Team met in November with the new members. We thanked Jana Norris and David Dyer for their help and welcomed Liz Rapp and Walter Norris as their replacements.

For our first agenda item we discussed a resume we received from a person interested in our open minister position. This person had no formal minister training or experience, so we voted to not pursue them further.

Next, we went over the search and selection process. This process covers from our UUA Minister Search Portal activity to selecting a candidate and turning them over to the Board for final compensation negotiation and Membership approval. Starting Dec 1, ministerial candidates apply for open positions that UU churches have posted in the UUA Minister Search Portal. Fingers crossed that we would get some good candidates of interest.

Finally, we reviewed our list of questions for candidates.

We are now refining both the search and selection process and questions list to bring them up to current thinking. These are both living documents so need ongoing review and need a certain flexibility when needed.

We will meet again on December 12.

Liz Rapp, Walter Norris, Marla Loturco, Marilyn Alexander, Jim Holmes

## Family Shelter Dinner

Red River UU is returning to providing meals quarterly to Texoma Family Shelter (our neighbors on the corner), with our next meal scheduled for Saturday, December 14.

We have a core team already committed to helping but we would love to have more join us. Please contact Paula at (760) 828-7768, via text or phone call if you would like to help as well.



# TXUUJM Appeal

We hope you will consider a gift in support of this important network support UU Values – even if you like in OK. Dec. 3rd is Giving Tuesday.

The work we do at the Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry (TXUUJM) matters far beyond Texas. *Policies crafted here often serve as models for harmful legislation nationwide, and the stakes couldn't be higher.* That's why TXUUJM focuses on critical issues such as LGBTQIA+ rights, reproductive justice, racial equity, voting rights, healthcare access, immigrant justice, and more. The campaign ends on December 4th at 11:29 AM.

TAP/CLICK THE WORD "CONTRIBUTE" TO MAKE YOUR CONTRIBUTION >



30 Backers

\$4,350.00 USD

Raised in 26 days

54%

Funded of \$8,000.00 Goal

3 days to go

Started on Nov 4, 2024 8:45 AM CST  
Ends on Dec 4, 2024 11:45 AM CST

Contribute

# Facilities Update

Exciting news - the work in the kitchen is complete except for a few minor punch list items.

During all this update activity we discovered that the Bay Window in the room across from the kitchen had a bad leak during a heavy rainstorm. That leak has been repaired.

This month we will be adding additional lighting in the chapel to help the choir see their music better. Will also be adding some track lights for the west stage area to eliminate harsh shadows that we get on speakers that are standing on the stage.

We are also adding a cover over the backdoor ramp and a handrail. We hope work on this starts soon. We are currently waiting for permit approval from the City of Denison.

Jim Holmes - Facilities Manager

# The Giving Tree Cometh

Santa's helpers have been faithfully working 'round the clock' to fill the Giving Tree before the first of December so everyone will have lots of time to choose items you would be happy to purchase.

Each year we turn to ourselves to fund those pesky, everyday items that everyone uses but are not part of the church budget.

Then there are some needs which arise during the budget year that were not anticipated. Those needs are more important.

The RRCEOAC (Red River Christmas Elves of All Colors) thank you for being such wonderful, caring, and supportive people again this giving season.



## Our non-resident Poet...

*What would be the most wonderful gift you could receive? What items do you desire, not available in any catalog?*

Wish List – by Don Mathis

A phone call from my son. He could put my grandchildren on the line, and they could babble happily, and I would exclaim, "Is that right?" and "Really?" I would talk to my daughter-in-law for a bit, then put my son back on the line, and when it was time to hang up, he would be the first to say, "I love you!"

A card for my birthday. When I was a kid, I would get cards from my grandparents, aunts and uncles, friends, and immediate family. Most of my extended family are dead and gone; no more cards and letters from them. It seems as my age increases, the recognition of my age decreases. Will I be remembered at all when I die?

The invincibility of youth, the assurance of immortality, the metabolism to consume three breakfast tacos every day (and not gain weight). I could stay up late, wake up early, and not get tired. My risk tolerance was low, and my energy level was high.

The way Christmas used to be. It was a time of innocence, a season of hopefulness, an era of possibility. Family fights were fewer, and there was less commercialism. The bounty of the food and the fellowship of extended family exuded thankfulness.

The love of my dear, sweet mother. Her empathy was healing. Her presence could bring peace; her humor, happiness; her demeanor, respect; and her words, wisdom. She was the glue that held the family together.

Peace, love, and tranquility. Health, happiness, and time to enjoy it all. My hope is that you get what you wish for the holidays!

## Money Matters

The new year started in July 2024 with a very generous donation of \$50,000 from Marilyn Alexander's daughter, Merrilee Kick. An additional \$10,361.00 was donated in October 2024. A total of \$54,138.44 has been spent on repairs and renovations. That leaves \$6,222.56 remaining in this fund as of October 31 which is expected to be spent in November.

In the month of October, we had total operating receipts of \$12,773.50. Total operating expenses for the month were \$3,975.05, leaving us with a net profit for the month of \$8,798.45. The net profit for the month was due to the timing of pledge payments.

For the fiscal year-to-date we had an operating net profit of \$6,496.20. The year-to-date net profit was due to the timing of pledge payments.

As of October 31, 2024, we had \$22,255.35 available in checking for general operations. There was also \$9,934.74 available in the bank savings account for general operations plus \$4,871.08 restricted for the Minister Fund and \$5,951.89 held in trust for Kat Walston from the sale of her personal effects prior to moving into assisted living. In addition, we invested a total of \$66,784.40 in the UUA Common Endowment Fund. The congregation voted to use up to \$51,000.00 of the UUA Savings Fund for minister compensation.

Carole Harner, *treasurer*



## Women's Rights: Weaving a Tapestry of Peace



Join Us for Our 10 December Annual Gathering! **International Human Rights Day.** We'll reflect on how human rights, women's rights, and peace are intertwined. 4th Convocation keynote speaker Dr. Maureen Porter will re-cap her presentation, "JOINING HANDS TO WEAVE A GLOBAL TAPESTRY OF PEACE, DIGNITY, AND RESPECT" Various participants from around the world will reflect on the Convocation

- Convocation videos will explore the theme of "Weaving a Tapestry of Peace. Rev. Carol Huston will talk about the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), Beijing+30 (30 years since the Women's Conference in Beijing and the approval of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action), and highlight our UN/CSW Seminar in March 2025
- Beth O'Connell will close with the 4th Convocation Peace Declaration. This is a year-end fundraiser for ICUW. Please select the registration tier that is right for your contribution. Thank you for supporting the work of ICUW and funding specific programs to empower women internationally, countering the global backlash against women's and girls' rights.

**REGISTER NOW**  
for ICUW's Annual Gathering

The gathering will take place at the following times:  
10 am Eastern U.S. & Canada

[FIND YOUR LOCAL TIME](#)

Join Zoom Meeting on Tuesday via internet:

<https://bit.ly/ICUWZoomRoom-1a>

Or via phone - find your local number here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kdsBxNyMX8>

Meeting ID: 283 947 380

Password: 385478

## Our Elected Leaders

Board of Trustees

Jana Norris, *President*

Amy Hoffman-Shehan, *Vice president*

Carole Harner, *Treasurer*

Billie Barber, *Secretary*

David Dyer, *Trustee at large*

Committee on Ministry

Jim Holmes, Elbert Hill, Bruce Cameron

Nominating

Liz Rapp, Paula Jennings, Marilyn Alexander

Our Various Teams

*The first name is the team leader*

**Adult Forum:** Marilyn, Amy, Jim, Marion

**Aesthetics:** Amy, Adrian Jana,

**Audio Visual:** Jim, Carole, Liz, Marla

**Caring Circle:** David

**Choir,** Marilyn, Bill, Cindy, Doug

**Earth Day Planning:** Amy, Cristin, Jan, Marla, Megan,

**Endowment:** Doug

**Facebook Admin:** Amy

**Finance:** Carole, Jim, Marilyn

**Grounds:** Marilyn, Paula

**Historian:**

**Long Range Planning:** Jim, Marilyn

**Membership:** Susie, Amy, Adrian, Doug, Paula, Marla

**Minister Search:** Jim, Liz, Marilyn, Marla, Walter

**Monarch Way Station:** Linn, Paula

**Moveable Feast:** Elbert & Marion

**Music:**

**NTUUC Rep:** Marilyn

**Publications:** Doug

**Rainbow Team:** Jack, Adrian, Amy, Billie, Cristin, Jana, Olivia, Sherilyn, Thomas

**RE Team:** Jack

**Safe Congregation Panel:** Jana

**Social Justice:** Jan

**Web Team:** Jim, Hannah, Marla

**Worship:** Marla, Adrian, Dan